Spring 4-29-2015

Interview with Reverend Stan Davis

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Transcription
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(Recording started over to be inline with video. Interviewer states we are restarting)

Dawn Butler: Hello my name is Dawn Butler.

DB: Please state your name.
Reverend Stan Davis: My name is Reverend Stan Davis.

DB: Today's date is April, twenty-ninth, 2015,

DB: This interview is being conducted at Columbia College Chicago Library on the third floor.

DB: This interview is part of the Columbia College Chicago Archives and Honors Oral History Project: Chicago '68! that is part of a collaboration with the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago.

DB: Um, reverend Davis why did you agree to be interviewed for this project?
RSD: The project began with conversati--a series of conversations with a good friend of mine as we were traveling as part of an interfaith group in the country of Jordan, in the Middle East four years ago. We would move from one place to another and we had lots of time to sit in a very nice bus, to talk, and we reflected on our 35 or 40 years friendship and began to say- ya know, these wonderful stories and experiences that we've have been sharing with each other are going to be--going with us when we die, and nobody will know-- about any of this stuff, so in speaking with our daughter who is the head of archives here at Columbia she said ‘wait a minute, she said just wait a minute let me talk to--this wonderful professor we have, Dr. Erin McCarthy and see if she might be interested.' So over the last couple years Dr. McCarthy and I have been talking, and we came up with the idea, wouldn’t it be great to get eleven--or however many, matching stude--the number of students with the number of activists, that were around the 1968 Democratic Convention here in Chicago. Ahh, and so--that’s how this project began.

DB: What year were you born?
RSD: I was born [REDACTED] 1937.

DB: And place of birth?
RSD: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania but was living in Metuchen, New Jersey at the time.

DB: What is your father's name and place of birth?
RSD: My father's name is ah, Stanley L. Davis Sr. and he is, he was born Lansdale, Pennsylvania a suburb of Philadelphia.

DB: And, what is your mother's name and place of birth?
RSD: My mother ah, name was Helen Mae, M-a-e Snyder and she was born in--I believe Denver, Pennsylvania which is in Lancaster county Pennsylvania.

DB: What year were you married?
RSD: I was married on the second of, ah, July 1960.

DB: How many children do you have?
RSD: I have two children ahh, a son John who is in Portland, Oregon and our daughter Heidi who lives in Berwyn, Illinois and works here at Columbia College.

DB: What is your wife's name?
RSD: Christine

DB: What is your earliest memory?
RSB: Oh, my--my earliest memory huh, maybe throwing a stuffed bunny out of a playpen when I was, I don't know, eighteen months or two years old. I don't know why that sticks with me, but that's the earliest memory that I can think of.

DB: What was your um, what is your favorite childhood memory?
RSD: (Big inhale) um, my favorite childhood memory--apart from--looking at ahh--walking outside through woods and, and looking at clouds and trees and animals and all that sort of thing. Umm--also, ah, living near a big city like New York City, which is where, and spending time there, so it was a mix of sort pastoral and urban together.

DB: How was religion observed in your home?
RSD: Umm--religion was observed, ahhm--regularly, we attended a church, a, church of the Brethren which is a small Protestant denomination, um, we would go weekly and my mother was a very religious person ahh--ahh--she taught school for--ahh--seven or eight years but was very active in our local congregation.

DB: Can you tell me more about the Brethren?
RSD: Church of the Brethren came out of sort of the left wing of the reformation, they said that Luther didn't go far enough, ah, meaning that the, for the brethren this meant that the, um--the heart of the church is the local congregation and the Brethren, ah, pledge themselves to lead a simple life, a life that was concerned with, today we would say ecology, they were also part of the movement like Mennonites and Quakers and Amish that were pacifists, so, ah, they were a peace loving people, ah, probably best summed up by, ah, the phrase of the ,of the founder of the denomination ahh, 'for the glory of god and our neighbors good.'

DB: Ah, What type of music was played in your home during your childhood?
RSD: What kind of music?
DB: Umhum
RSD: Music, oh my. Um--everyth--everything I was a, ah--I was a great listener to the radio. I am old enough to remember what the world was like before television and I would listen to everything from contemporary pop--popular music and jazz to classical.

DB: Where did you go to high school?
RSD: I went to Lansdale High School, ah, it was about 650 students in our hometown. Um, this September I will going bac--my wife and I, my wife was part of the same class, um--we are going back for our sixtieth high school reunion

DB: What do you remember about the air raid drills at school or at home?
RSD: Air raid dril--ah, I remember ah, two kinds of air raid drills, um, when I was living in Northern New Jersey we were very close to--um--the ocean and to New York City. Ah, I can remember as a child ah, having blackout curtains, these were curtains that, when they, air raid siren went off, you would pull the curtains down and turn off as many lights as you could because you didn't wana have lights showing up, in case there was a German air raid that came in. Ah--headlamps in cars, half of them were painted black, so that you, ah, the light wouldn't shine out. My father had a physical impairment that kept him out of service even though he was part of church of the Brethren he would have gone into service for WWII if he could, and he became an air raid warden and so what an air raid warden did is, they, they wore kinda pith helmet like you see is those old movies about India, it was very hard, I still have it at home and he would um, he would walk around the neighborhood and go up to people's houses, if there was a crack in the curtain or something, he would knock on the door and tell them to cover it up, so--ah, secondly ah, we had, we did have some practice in school of diving under deck, uh, under desks just in case. What we learned that we didn't know at the time was that German U-boats

were off the entire east coast and ah, when we would go to ah, the east coast you talk about going to the shore, the west coast you talk about going to the beach. When we would go to the shore, there would be these tar balls that would come up out of the ocean and you'd, you'd would ask people what they were - 'oh, just somebody discharging from an oil tanker,' wasn't that at all we learned later, somebody had been hit and sunk and that was residue that was, that was left from that sinking. So, my father was also an airplane spotter (cough) excuse me, an airplane spotter is--my mother would pack a lunch for--a dinner for us and we would climb up this tower and ah, my father would call into a certain place from the tower (cough) excuse me, where um--any kind of flying object would be reported too, he had a book that had silhouettes of different planes so he that could try and, and, let them know what kind of plane it was um--east coast people were very afraid of, of, what might happen, this is all by the way before the bomb--the, the Atomic Bomb.

DB: Um, Who did you identify with in High School?
RSD: Hm,hm,hm,hm, oh my heavens--we talk--are you talking about individual people or pop--or people from culture or?
DB: You can talk about both
RSD: Ok, who did I identify with? I identified with um--(laugh) lets see ah, in, in popular culture there was ahh--some jazz, some jazz people that I really liked Dizzy Gillespie ahh, a number of other people, I was, I played trombone in high school, in the high school band um, but I was really a, a photographer, I was the yearbook photographer and all that kind of stuff. I identified with--people that for the most part--had a, were not self important and you could have fun with ahh--on the other hand people who, who had a, who had a kinda social concern for things.

DB: In high school what did discussions with your parents' center on?
RSD: Uhmm, getting good grades, ah, preparing for college, sports with my dad. We would go to ah--major league baseball games in Philadelphia at the time their were two major league baseball teams, playing in one field, there was a, a, field called Shibe Park which is no more and um--both the Philadelphia Phillies who are still there and the Philadelphia athletics who are now in Oakland, California ahh, played in that, in that field on alternate, alternate schedules so it, ahh, we would go to see the Philadelphia, Phil,ahh,ahh Eagles and ahh--some college games so ther--sports like that

DB: How did your relationship to religion change during high school?
RSD: The church of the Brethren was basically a rural church and socially liberal--but--conservative in something's um--you, you weren't suppose to, to dance, well I was an urban Brethren, I didn't grow up at a farm, where alot of people that I got to know later in high school were involved in, in, ahh, grew up in more rural settings, and so I was an

urban Brethren which put me sort of as a inside, outsider and those were non-issues for me. I didn't care whether, I mean my wife--I dated, my future wife and I would go to, ahh, when I finally, started dating her in our junior year we would go to dances, I never thought anything of it. Umm--so some of those social things on one hand I--didn't participate in, on the other hand I think that the social message of doing--ahh, of being concerned for others than yourself was a very important thing I learned from, from, ahh--the, the religious ahh--part of my life and it was something that just increased.

DB: When did you first recognized a difference in treatment to another person
RSD: I grew up, Lansdale was a town that had no African Americans, ahh, Italians were sort of segregated in, in one little part of the town, this is a town of about 12,000 outside of Philadelphia at the time, probably the first people I saw ahh, that were discriminated against were interestingly enough Nesa people, first generation Japanese, who moved into our area and if one know anything about the history of the Japanese in WWII its ahh, not a very happy thing, they were ah, relegated to, um--our own form of camps, ahh particularly in the west coast, you were given three days to, get your affairs in order and leave, and you were whisked off to a camp where you lived for two or three years, moving into our home town were Japanese that had been there for a long time and suddenly viewed with great suspicion.

DB: What were your aspirations when you graduated from High School in 1955?
RSD: I thought I might go into the ministry, I thought I might become a teacher, ahh--I think those, those were the two things that--I ended up being a history major in college so teaching was one of the, one of the areas I was, I was exploring but ministry was always something that I thought I might get into.

DB: Um, tell me about Juanita College in 1955
RSD: --I'm sorry
DB: Tell me about, is it Juanita College?
RSD: Juniata, it's an American Indian name which is very confusing cause nobody ever heard of it out here, its named after a tribe of Indians in central Pennsylvania there's a big river that flows into the main river called the Sasquehanna that is named the Juniata so, but you gotta be from that area um, so, ah--Juniata is twenty-five miles south of Penn State, state college which is right in the center of the state it is set in the gorgeous hills, beautiful, beautiful place to, to go, ah, very poor part of Pennsylvania um, the--mines had begun to close up around there and company towns were not to far away and so you had, you had these people coming in from places like, from other parts of, of the state and from other states into this town. The college experience was great, theres ah--it ah--it really probably had a lot to do with shaping who I am.

DB: And um, tell me how that is.
RSD: (Breath) I was a, I was liberal arts major--history major but in liberal arts mostly and I think what college gave me, the--trained me for was how to adapt to change, if there is one thing that is constant as the Buddhist will tell us is impermanence and that is quite true, we are ah, we are quite imper--ah--everything we think is fixed is probably not, and um, I think the ability to, of, of my college education was to say, look at things and say ok, here's what right, here's what's wrong, here's what needs to change and then um, you have to decide how you are going to respond to that change, are you going to resist it or you gonna be part of making the change happen.

DB: What were your influences in, who or what were your influences in college?
RSD: (laugh) Oh, it was--some of the professors I had, that were a models of what I was trying to do they had been not only academically, ah, superior in getting Phd's from name colleges and universities but also people that had done alot of, ah, social change, ah, work as well, these were not just--the Juniata is a church of the Brethren school affiliated with it, but it was not--the vast majority of the students were not from the church of the Brethren so ah, I, I would say that, plus ahh--a group of souls like myself who, ah--meet now once a year--we probably had alot more influence on each other, I think than, ah, then we know, because ah, there this strange bond of ah, we have, this band of brothers if you will that hangs together with our spouses who, all get along including the second wife's (laugh) and so a, ahh--I'd say that also some, some very good friends of mine in the church of the Brethren, I don't mean, I don't mean--who were, didn't go to Juniata but went to other colleges and universities and we stayed in touch and they probably had a great deal of influence on me as well.

DB: How were you affected by segregation?
RSD: By segregation--I really didn't see segregation close up til I came to Chicago apart from this little ghettoizing of Italians and looking suspiciously at our local people in Lansdale that were Japanese ancestry. Ah, I didn't understand racial segregation really until I came to Chicago.

DB: And, when did you become politically aware?
RSD: Oh, politically aware. I became politically aware in, in college certainly, ahh, my, I--I grew up--I grew--there is Philadelphia and then to the north is Montgomery County--ah, Philadelphia, ah, Pennsylvania was founded by William Penn and it was called his holy experiment, meaning that unlike other ah, colonies, anybody could come religiously, Maryland was Catholic, um--there were Baptist in Rhode Island, there were Congregationalists in Massachusetts ah, but Pennsylvania let everybody in, religious dissidence, ah, members of other faiths, ah, there were some of the first slaves were

Muslim, Jews came as well, and they were welcomed, um, Pennsylvania had this kind of libertarian view, view, then Mr. Penn got into trouble with himself, he was english and he didn't know what to do with the Welsh, the Welsh and the english do not get along, so he gave them 50,000 acres to the north and said, stay there, go, don't come into my, my town of Philadelphia, just be by yourselves, so we grew up, it, it was a Republican ahh, it was a Republican county, many of our--the four times president Roosevelt ran for office he never got a majority vote in Montgomery County, we, I use to, I use to think that they were probably tores in the revolution but ah, after the first political person that I worked for was a liberal republican named Schweiker ah, who was running for umm, congress and then when I came out here, that ended, ah, I--figured out this was not, this is not the, party for me, so, I became, I switched to becoming a democrat which I had been all my life or-- independent as well

DB: What brought you to Chicago in 1959?
RSD: After I graduated from high, from college, I came to Bethany Theological Seminary, which was the seminary of the church of the Brethren, and I had made my choice to try ministry.

DB: An, a, why did you choose Bethany Seminary School?
RSD: Because it was the only denomination, it was the only seminary of the denomination of which I was set and I hoped to become ordained in.

DB: Tell me more about um, why you wanted to be a--minister, a reverend.
RSD: As I looked, as I looked at the professions--probably the, my, the original thing I thought, I would probably do is to go to seminary and start and begin by taking a local congregation and serving it, um, it was more out of a service motif, what could I do to, to help people and I thought that the ministry was one way to do that, that would be helpful, I'd had a lot of experience with the church of the Brethren I had been involved in, in its ah, youth activities at the local area, at the state level and then on a national youth board so I really got to see how the, the church could be a vehicle for change, one of the things the church of the Brethren did it start what today is known as the 'Heifer Project.' After WWII the church of the Brethren because of its pacifistic beliefs ahh--felt that getting help to the countries that had been so devastated in Europe, needed help, and so they, ah, instead of just sending money, they start, because they were rural folk they started sending chickens and cows and sheep and all that, over, so they could begin to not only, so they could begin to, build up a local rural economy as well, so I got, I got to see close up how a church could be involved in things like that.

DB: Um, describe the neighborhood you lived in when you moved to Chicago

RSD: Neighborhood I lived in was, is called North Lawndale. North Lawndale at the time, ah, is a it was the home, home of the twenty-first, a twenty-fourth ward. The twenty-fourth ward is the ward of man, one of the best politicians this country ever produced named Jake Harvey who created the um, the democratic machine here in Chicago. It was, the twenty-fourth ward when I, North Lawndale when I came in was, had been Jewish, ahh--but it was beginning to change and had become ahh--Jewish some, um--few non-Jewish Caucasians, and then in came Latinos, and that was in the fall of 59, by, I had left to get married in 1960 and when I came back three months later it had gone from--all of those people I mentioned before, to African American in three months and I had to learn why

DB: And so what did you do, to learn why.
RSD: What I learned is that there was, what I call a perfect storm, of segregation here in this, in this town. There was the great migration of African Americans from the South to the North, began in the twenties and thirties. In Chicago they were ghettoized in the South Side because the North was still quite resistant to African Americans at the time, and then it began to push out and turn West and go, and go into the West Side the process was pretty simple you would, you would get banks and lending institutions to disinvest in the community, say we're not going to write any more mortgages, in say, North Lawndale, that left you open if you wanted to buy a property to go to people that would charge you exorbitant rates of interest on something called land contracts. You would have the realtor, the real estate industry being the foot soldiers of this, they'd go a mile down the road and say--you know what's happening further east, their coming, meaning blacks, you better sell now because--your hou--your property values are gonna go down, we can get you a good price always under the market rate, than African Americans would come along and they would buy at a higher price and pay these exorbitant rates of interest and this entire process was blessed by the political structure of Mayor Daley the first--so it was, it was a perfect storm, you couldn't, you couldn't get out of it because Mayor Daley wanted to keep blacks contained, to keep them away from his power of base, whi--first which was the, the white ethnics and what was called the bungalow districts at the time, ah, he then later began to build a power base within the black community and thats another whole, that's another whole set of stories.

DB: Um, I, I know you mentioned you met your wife Christine in high school um, how did you, how did you meet?
RSD: We meet in seventh grade (laughs) were are product of the insecure fifties, no not at all, ahh, we meet in seventh grade and ahh--we were involved in alot of the same social activities and stuff at school we were both in those days, oh god it sounds so weird, we were academics, and then there were generals, and then there were secretarials, and then there were vocationals, and you, those, those were the academic tracks you were on, so we were, we were academics, ah, when we went to one, (laughing) one of our high school

reunions ah, this guy goes, 'can I come over and sit, over here, with this table of academics,' I mean this is twenty-five years later, who cares, but obviously for some people it was a big issue.

DB: What were your plans together for the future?
RSD: Our plans together for the future were to try and I think at first--go to seminary, she was going to be a school teacher she had gotten her, ah, she had worked two years before we go married so she could pay of--in those days in Pennsyl--she went to a state school and if she, if she could pay her, pay her, ah, back the discount that they gave people going into this, into public education in Pennsylvania, they would, they would wipe out your debt so she did that for two years and so by the time we got married, that had been taken care of then she got a job out here until we had our two children.

DB: Um, tell me about Galewood Community the first church you pastored in 1961.
RSD: I was sent in, I was sent in ah--when you're in seminary you have to do fieldwork, so called, meaning they'd put you out into, into some kind of ministry in this case, to see, to give you some experience of what's it like. I was sent to Galewood Community is, is--the community of Austin has a little pan handle that goes over Oak Park and Galewood community church is immediately North of Oak Park and at that time it was a, a Scotch, Scandinavian, German community into which were coming people from the west side of the city who were Italian, Polish, Irish ah, and that had changed the ethnic mix. Chicago's a very--I use these terms because Chicago is a very ethnic town ah, and people's identity get shaped around--not only their ethnicity but ah, which spills into--where you went to church, I mean there are still people my age and younger who will identify themselves, I'm from Saint Helens, I'm from Saint Catherine, St Lucy, whatever it is, and um, if fact the, the catholic schools use to have, ah, out here they are called grammar schools K8, they had grammar school reunions, ya know because your identity gets so shaped by that, I was in a meeting last ah, a year ago when ah, coach K of Duke that won the national ah, national collegiate basketball um--um--what do you call it, the, the national championship, ah, is from Chicago and he gave this, he was receiving an award here, and he, he got up and talked about flying in two days early because he wanted to re-experience his old neighborhood and he went back to his home catholic church and walked to his parochial school--this is Chicago and so when I talk about all these different ethnic groups it's not being pejorative it's to say, that's how this, this city works, so the, at, at Galewood things had changed things ah, things were changing the--little more stayed Northern European folks were being displa--were, were moving and the Southern and Eastern European folks were coming and then bringing with them from their tight knit ethnic communities a different, a different style of, of living and so into what had become a, I was setting up a, I was the new student youth minister and so I worked with the, the senior high kids and then I was to set up a new junior high program which I did and three weeks after starting it ah, in January of 1960 we had 70 kids in the

basement but they were all the black leather jacket it said of--the guys from park 9 as it was called Hammonson park, guys and gals and today you would call it a drop in center we had no idea what we were doing, we just had these, these kids came in, an, there was a fringe member of this, this gang that was a member of the church and I think he was going to see what this new young minister was going to be like _(?) minister in training, so thats, thats how I got started we kept that going um--for--two years I was in seminary before I took an intern here.

DB: What was your ah, first experience as an activist?
RSD: First experience as an activist here in Chicago was--with a man named Al Raby of Sainted Memory who ah, we were prot--ah, we were protesting something called Willis Wagons this requires a little explanation, um--as I described the segregation in town, education was quite segregated as well and so the Benjamin C. Willis was the ah--school superintendent of Chicago public schools and in order to contain people who were--of color, he put um, trailers in the playgrounds, because they were increasing, they were having increasing number of students cause he didn't want these, to spill out into the white areas, and so they were called Willis Wagons and I can re--my first, my very first ah, demonstration I was on LaSalle Street in front of city hall yelling, yelling to the mayor ah, about how unfair this was to everybody.

DB: Um, How did your parents participate in activism?
RSD: My parents were not the activist kind, ah--my, my, my parents would call periodically to find out where their son was running around and what he was doing but out of both ah, fear and ahh, ah, concern as well as ah--this is a whole new world for them, my father was politically involved but I mean he was a businessman ah, he worked for ah, ceramic tile company as a purchasing agent and credit manager and my mother taught school so their activis--were not activist as we think of today.

DB: How did your wife participate in activism?
RSD: Ah, She, she would go with me to--some events, she was very much involved with me when we worked with street gangs because ah, we would have ah, some of our young people we were working with over to the house, she would come over with me sometimes in the church basement when we had these drop in center evenings and so on and um, she was involved that way and then we had children, and then, then that got to be her main responsibility.

DB: Um, Why did you become an activist?
RSD: I couldn't remain silent in the face of what I had experienced as I saw how African Americans were being treated, particularly African Americans in this case, ah, by our

society, it just didn't se--it didn't seem right to me, plus I grew up with a bit of a--we were-- an outsider, insider, now let me explain that, if you are a member of one of the peace churches at a time of war you are viewed as a bit suspect and if you grew up behind Davis, the name is Welsh behind that is Reitmeyer, Lutz, Snyder, German, if you grew up in a German American communities in WWII it was not unlike being a Muslim today. Ah, oh my mother's first language was Pennsylvania Dutch which is a dialect of German, um, my wife's all four of her parents spoke either Pennsylvania Dutch or High German her, ah, grandmother on her father's side came from the Black Forest and you were, you know be careful of these folks you're not quite sure ah--recently discovered that there was a pro-Nazi movement within the United States ahh, supporting Hitler it was called Bunds, B-u-n-d-s and, I didn't know this growing up but I just learned on a PBS show recently that from ten miles from where I lived there was a Bund youth camp, summer youth camp to train these young, particularly boys how to be ah, supporters of the third-Reich, so yes ah, I got to feel some of that myself and then when I saw it, how it was translated many, many times over in the African American community it just, ahh, I had to do something.

DB: Um, what did um, how did becoming an activist change your identity?
RSD: Hm, change my identity that's interesting, um, I would say--I think it changed my identity-- from being somebody that--liked to get along with everybody and when you become an activist you can't do that anymore, you, you take a position and that means some people are not gonna like it, and some people are, and I had to learn the--not painful part, the, the major changes that I, I lost some friends in the process, but that's ok. Ah, we would have, ah, we would have people that just couldn't understand why we were, we were do-involved in all this stuff and--you'd try to explain and they just either--give you a flat response or say I just don't agree with you and I don't understand you, you've changed, I'd say 'yeah for the better from my standpoint.'

DN: Tell me about your first job after the Seminary in 1964
RSD: I had two years at, at Galewood Community Church where we began working with these ah, (noise from hand on table) I use the word street gangs they were, that's how they were described in those days, we are not, we are talking west side story street gangs, we are not talking crack cocaine and oozies, I can remember older guys beating younger guys up for mentioning the word drugs and two years later they would be dealing drugs themselves to the next generation down, um, but the--I did that for two years I became an, I had an internship for a year because ah, through a protestant social service agency that said, a church getting involved in this level of community problem solving where you are is really unusual and we want you to work there full time, so I worked there full time for a year, the minister left the church, and I was ask to be the interim minister so I was there, I still hadn't finished seminary and then I went back and finished seminary in 1964 and I had to decide, was I going to take a big church of the Brethren in Ohio or was

I going to continue to build on the work I had done over those five years with these troubled kids and I decided on the troubled kids side. So ah, it became an experie--so called experiment between the YMCA Metropolitan Chicago, the church of the Brethren and the United Church of Christ, United Church of Christ being the denomination of the Galewood Community Church. YMCA Metropolitan Chicago is not just gyms and swims it is, it was a huge social service agency with forty ah, centers and sixteen camps and they were doing alot of work in the, in the city particularly with, some of the emerging major street gangs like the vice lords and all that kind of stuff ah, that was a whole separate wing, they were interested, the Y was interested in, why in the world is there somebody working with street gangs up in this, middle cl--what seemed to be middle class white neighborhood and so that's how, that's how we got started.

DB: And what demographic did the Metropolitan YMCA serve?
RSD: What demographic, oh it served everything from--inner city, outer rings suburban community-- it was a multi-million dollar social service agency it served across the--city and the metropolitan area.

DB: And, what were the main struggles of the YMCA community?
RSD: Well--huh, a number, one was the YMCA had to, had all these local, local centers and they had traditionally been a place for fitness, physical fitness, in a number of places they had single room occupancy what we call today SRO's single room occupancy places, there are very few of those left anymore, ah, and provided a real shelter for people that were, that, that needed, that kind of affordable housing, you had, that was the backdrop of the Y, then in came a leadership at the Y that said, we need to do more than just that, we need to become engaged in the problems and so senior programs started and then working with kids that were not going to come into gym and swim classes but were going to be out, because they were out in the community and so they developed a whole network of people who would work in communities like what I was doing, so called outreach work. We might be based in a facitli--a YMCA facility, but we, our goal wasn't to bring people in as new members our goal was to go out and intervene in their lives before they got into more difficulty with their families, the community etc.. and themselves.

DB: Uhm, What services did you create at, for the YMCA?
RSD: I ended up creating a, um, the YMCA's were called centers, so you had for instance the Irving Park Center which is a big huge building with two pools and I don't how, a hundred rooms, for single people to live in, to ah, more smaller community based, ah, YMCA's, and mine was a non-facility YMCA, I created a organization called Northwest Youth Outreach, that today is know as Youth Outreach Services. Ahh, Northwest Youth Outreach and worked with--just west of where you are the North Branch of the river out

to the Cook Dupage County line from North Ave to the end of the city and out into so called Leyden Township which is those, those communities South and East of O'Hare field, we had twenty-five staff at the time I left, and the purpose of the staff was to go out, into the community and try and engage these young people and find out what their issues were, what their problems were, and then provide as many services as we could whether that was counseling or tutoring or--ah, drug treatment and that sort of thing and that, so that was a whole, that was, we were the first, Northwest Youth Outreach was the first community ah, non-facility YMCA program in outer ring area's and--

DB: Um were the camps a success?
RSD: Were what?
DB: Were the camps um, the programs a success?
RSD: (breath) yes and no. Yes, a, yes for the kids we were able to reach and redirect ah, no for those that we couldn't but an, an one of the great pitfall--one of the great um, sadness's are those that you couldn't reach who ended up in jail or who got killed, ah, or who, who became--you couldn't correct their self-destruction, and it was, it was very painful, but then you looked at the ones that you were able to reach and turn around and feel very good about that. Ah, a very humbling experience to know that you can't, which is always good for activist to understand, you can't change everything instantly and you can't change people's attitudes and lives instantly either--so ah--I, I viewed success as how we were, how we were facilitating, young people really moving on into more productive lives then they were headed for.

DB: Tell me about the Chicago Civil Ri--Civil Rights Movement in 1966
RSD: Oh, my-- well, those first ah--those first ahh, lets see I came here in 1959 so there was--there was an emerging group of people who were involved in trying to address the housing situation here, the education system here, and the lack of economic opportunity ahh, and that got focused when Dr. King decided that Chicago would be his first Northern ahh, place of, ahh--engagement and it was ah, that coalesced all of us who were here and there and everywhere because when Dr. King came to town that was, that was a big deal. Ahh, the YMCA because of its deep involvement in the African American community hire--ah, worked with Kings staff and they were consultants so many of us were trained by Kings staff, Al Raby, James Orange, and ah,ah--on and on, ah, C.T. Vivian we were train--trained in first of all defining what the issue were, and then how do you address those and how do you do that non-violently and so, those, that was just one of the, that was probably one of the highlights of my life to,to be trained by those folks, then the church that I was attending which was near the seminary, ahh was one of the churches that Dr. King used for community meetings and that's where I met him a few times, so, because he lived just south of the seminary, Dr. King and his family moved here for--about a year.

DB: Tell me about your experience meeting Dr. King
RSD: Hum--Hum--first physically a short man, you, we think of the of, of, national figures as you know, these sort of gigantic people that are, because of who they are and what they've done, he was a short man, but, but there was a--its hard to say, there was a sense of power to the man that was just there, it was in the eye's, it was in the, it was in his ability to clarify issues, in his ability to point in new directions, ah he was um--I remember feeling there was also a great tiredness to him, ahh as you read back over his life and learn more and more about his life, it's, it's a wonder in many ways he lived as long as he did because just the sheer physical and mental exhaustion of while you're in Chicago you're also dealing with stuff down in the South and, and these people--these people--getting, getting, lynched and burned, and then he came up here and as he said many, as he said a number times, uh, he, he thought he'd seen racism at its worse until he came here and saw in Marquette Park where he got hit with ahh, some flying stones, and up in the communities where I was, ahh, with the marching of the civil, of the civil rights movement people, it was just, it was just awful I mean--do you want me to tell a couple, ok, the--one of my jobs during the civil rights movement was to--to the east of where I was working at the time, with these street gang kids, there, there's a community called Belmont-Cragin and Belmont-Cragin was white ethnic, pure and simple, now i don't mean that pej--again not pejoratively these were folks who were, they were as scared of--what was happening to them as the African Americans were, but in a different way they had according to them, they had been forced to move because of African Americans so that, they had to move for, for, because they were getting run out ah, ah, by the real estate industry, ahh, but they didn't view it that way, it wasn't the industry that did it, it wasn't Mayor Daley that did it, it wasn't the disinvestment of the, of, of it was blacks that did it to them. So when you had, when you are trying to get open communities where you can have this burgeoning um--increasing population of African Americans as Jesse Jackson said one time, 'a quarters worth of people living a dimes worth of space' they're trying to find new places to go, they couldn't find them, and so, there were civil rights marches as part of the civil rights movement in these communities in Belmont-Cragin and so my gang guys would be there and they were enabled by the parents, they became a kind of shock troupe, for parents who would, egg them on to throw rocks and bottles at, or whatever they could, there's a huge bridge over Central Ave and--Fuller--Central Ave and Fullerton I can remember walking down Fullerton Ave, with--Fullerton Ave use to have a concrete center and I would stand there listening to the parents egg their kids on to throw rocks and bottles at three-quarters of my friends who were demonstrating, and my job was to try to keep these guys away from that, ya know, go do something else, this is not, this is not what we are here for, and then you'd try to sit and talk to them and but it was, it was very, very--those were ugly, ugly, ugly times ah, were ah, some of the guys that I worked with found cars that had been, that were, ahh, cars of the demonstrators they overturned them and set them on fire at the north end of Central Ave bridge, it was just, it was a, it was just a horrible, horrible business ahh--one day, one of these marches some of the guys came out and he said 'look aren't we cool' I, I wont tell you what I said--they had taken bed sheets and made Klan--costumes with pillow cases, with eye holes, I mean

it was ju--it was just awful, so when King said that he experienced some of the worst ah--racism in the North than he'd experienced even in the South, I could believe it because I saw it.

DB: Um, tell me more about the non-violent action training with Dr. King's people
RSD: (Breath) Define, understand what the issues are, define a strategy to try and address those, and the strategy that King was using was you have to be able to--show the general population many times through the media what the problems are, why are people upset, they are upset because of the lack of housing, of jobs, of good schools, etc, etc...and, and since, the powers that be weren't listening, they felt, you had to make them listen and the only way to make them listen was to provide opportunities to get your message out by--demonstrating, by marching, and by having meetings, then, trying to soften up the powers that be to say, look we'll stop when you start listening and doing some action, to do that but you have to be non-violent, you have to not be, in other words, you don't respond by throwing bricks and rocks back at people, you don't punch people out---you can protect yourself certainly but you don't--ah, you don't--engage in the same behavior that you're trying, you're trying to avoid for your own personal safety ahh, probably got best--tested out for me with somebody else who's going to be interviewed a man named Jim Aull who was running a coffee house, ahh, those were big deals in those days, coffee houses were a place where you'd go in for coffee and drinks and discussion and he was running a series on white racism in 1968 and we would stand and, my staff was there to protect this coffee house because it was set right in the middle of this Belmont Cragin area, that I was talking about and people would stand--it was advertised in the community that these discussions were being held communit--alot of people in the community didn't like it, so they would come, they would demonstrate outside and we would stand there and people would hit us and spit on us and all that kind of stuff, we never responded, and that, its amazing it carries its own power, there is a, there's a fascinating power to that ahh, that, it makes people, suddenly, when you don't respond they--it almost, it forces them to look at why are we doing this, ya know, these people are not, were not behaving the way they are and ahh, hopefully maybe a heart or two got changed in that, after we got cleaned up.

DB: Uhm, How did you feel about the Vietnam war, Tet offensive in January of 1968
RSD: O.k.--now we are getting to the lead up to the convention in many ways because the Tet offensive started in 19--in January of 1968 and that increased the size of the war, the, the scope of American involvement, remember we, we had almost 500,000 troops beginning to flood into that little place it was awful and so it was really the Tet offensive and the administration's response by increasing the bombings, increasing American involvement over there, that really began to take th--the divisions within the country over the war and exacerbate them even more. Um, there's an interesting show on ahh, PBS called Dick Cavett's Vietnam, Dick Cavett was a talk show host and I saw alittle of it the other night and it was fascinating because you could see, over the seven years of his

show, this is only an hour, an hour show, how people began to become more openly critical of the war and it, and, cut to, then the politics of it, um, after the Tet Offensive after ah, Lyndon Johnson I think in his heart of hearts knew that what was going on wasn't going to work, the end of March he said he wasn't going to run again and so here we are at the end of Mar--now you have a war that is--you have a war that is becoming increasingly unpopular and a president who has decided he's not to run again and then we get into some other issues.

DB: Um, tell me about the church you belonged to in 1968
RSD: The church I belonged to in 1968, I had left Gale--when I stopped my involvement at Galewood at 1964, I went back to the church of the Brethren that I had been a member of ahh, at, in East, in North Lawndale and it was increasingly an African American church it was an integrated church in those days, small maybe 150 people, had an African American minister and a number of the people from the sem- seminary the faculty, still attended there even though, yeah, the seminary was, was located just a few blocks away so it was, it was an integrated church and there was a hospital called Bethany Hospital right across the street part of the church of the Brethren as well, so you had hospital people, you had churc-you had seminary people all attending this church along with people in the community.

DB: In 1968 um, where were you working?
RSD: I was working at Northwest Youth Outreach at the time with my street gang kids on the Northwest side.

DB: And describe the neighborhood you lived in
RSD: Neighborhood we lived in was a, a neighborhood in the, in the city, ah, called, sorry, no by that time we had moved to a suburb, the first suburb West called Elmwood Park ahh, it had to do with schooling, I was close enough to the schools to know that, ah, not sure the quality of education that we were, our kids might go to, so we moved to that suburb.

DB: And, describe your reaction when you heard um, Lyndon B. Johnson announce um, in March of 68 that he would not seek re-election
RSD: I was glad and yet I felt very mixed because I am convinced and I think history probably proves it that--Kennedy's civil rights bill's, I mean Kennedy's push for civil rights, ah, bills the ah, would not have happened without Lyndon Johnson's ability to move things through. We have a voting rights bill and a public accommodations bill that would have not happened without him and yet he could not escape--so that was the good part of Lyndon.

He got sucked into this war that started back with Eisenhower as, with advisors and even as smart as he was, he couldn't figure a way to get out of it and I think he just decide--plus he had some physical problems, he had a heart condition and I think the pressure was probably too much--I was glad.

DB: Which nominees were you in support of in 1968
RSD: (laugh) Ah, my. o.k. Certainly not Richard Nixon ah--so that left me with, with two decisions Hubert Humphrey the so called Happy Warrior or Gene McCarthy and I was more supportive of McCarthy for his positions even though I wondered if he was going to be able to pull it off, but McCarthy.

DB: Tell me about your personal experience when um, Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in April 1968
RSD: Ah, April fourth, 1968--hm--it was Monday, Thursday of Holy week, I was at Galewood Community Church ah, because I was still, they asked, ah, they asked me if I would a, help out at that service, my wife was at our church on the west side ahh, we were ah--I didn't hear much about the reaction at first, that night, I mean that, soon after it had happened, my wife however, they stopped the services and they told people in the community to go back home because they weren't sure what was going to happen, this is from people in the community mostly African Americans they said, we don't want you to get hurt, we don't want to get hurt, so ah, it became, my wife got home ok and um, we then began to watch the news to see what was going on, we could see from our home, at that time we lived in OakLan--Oak Park and, we could see the fires, we could see the glow in the sky, and then we started getting calls from people from our church can we come and stay with you, because they were scared----it was, a, scary time, my wife when she--when we came into church on Sunday after that, and of course you went by tanks and National Guard troops, I mean it was, you think your living, we thought we were in Vietnam, we kept saying that to eachother, we were, we were glad that--things had begun to--ah, abate some, but it was, ah, the looting on the west side was just awful I mean the--it--you can only, you can only deny people--certain--you can only deny people certain basic human--rights so long without them exploding whether that was the West Side when Dr. King was killed or whether that was Baltimore this week, you can't keep, you can't keep people from, being fully human and expect that their going to just--and then give them, give them no hope for a future way out, what will the future be for better schools and better housing and better jobs, there's no answer and so you--and so you, you keep the pressure on people so long and then something sparks it, sparks it off and it's not surprising, so, on the West Side it was not surprising to see all that happen, I mean to this day the West Side is worse off than the South Side, to this day I can take you to, down Adams Street or Monroe Street and you will see vacant lots, what was there before, those were buildings that were burned in the 19-- 1968 and nothing has been done to fix them up, or repair them, or rebuild.

DB: Um, What did you discuss with your congregation or community um, about his assassination?
RSD: In the cong--in the, in the church of the Brethren of course it was, there was, there was anger and sadness it was, it was, a, it was--and how--isn't it wonderful that we're this little outpost of people who are both black and white that can come together and share in our feelings that was really good, then what can we do to stop the violence, ah, and that was first thing, then what can we do try and stop, or address some of these issue again, and recognizing that one little congregation can do only so much, but what is it, we can--what is it that, that we should be doing, um, and helping people that were living in the community that didn't wana leave, they were afraid if they left the community that the people might come in and not only loot their house but burn it down, I mean it was that, that anger and so, um, ya know, we tried to figure out a way of helping people at least in those first days just be safe

DB; Tell me about your experience when Bobby Kennedy was assassinated
RSD: Oh, My--
DB: in June of 1968
RSD: Yep, another, another feeling that a--prop was, was being kick out from under the society here we had an increased war (bang of table) in Vietnam, you had the president stepping down, you had Dr. King assassinated and now Bobby Kennedy, and it gave you this incredible feeling of living in the most unstable society that we've ever--that I certainly ever experienced and what was going to be next--what was goi--what was--and who was going to provide local as well as national leadership to get us, to get us to a more stable and helpful place and nobody knew where that came from, I would have to modify, my, I was thinking post Bobby Kennedy when you asked me about a, who, who was I supporting, I would have supported Bobby Kennedy, ah, not so much for the, ah, Kennedy aura and all of that but I thought he was tough enough to, to handle it, then after his assassination it was--the anti-war part of me said, it couldn't be Hubert Humphrey who was a generally a good guy, but not, I did see, think he was strong enough.

DB: And what did you discuss with your congregation or community about um, Bobby Kennedy's assassination
RSD: Uh--Where do we go, where do we go from here--what, how do we move from, from all these things that have happened into something that is going to provide some stability, while dealing with the fact that in 1963 when his brother was killed, I mean that was only five years before and we thought we were living in, I don't know if you know, I don't know if people still use the word ‘Banana Republic’, a Banana Republic is a, its a pejorative term I suppose from Central America where they would have dictators turn over about every other week or every other year well thats how the, our country was

getting to feel, it was totally unstable and it was, I guess the Bobby Kennedy conversations apart from the loss and the sadness for--what leadership we thought he might provide much less for their family going through all that, was--what, what next? Where do we, where do we turn? How are we going to help shape an answer to increasing som--some sense of stability

DB: One of the stops on, for the Democratic National Convention in 68 was Chicago um, for Aug 26 thru 29th. Tell me about the concerns with the DNC coming to Chicago
RSD: Well the concerns were--I had heard from alot of my friends and had been part of meetings where, ya know, we have to make an impact on the Democratic Convention because were afraid that if the Republicans get in, if Nixon's gonna get in, we're gonna really be in for a long war, we, (recorder bump) at that time Nixon was talking about how he had an answer to the war which of course never came until 1975, thats, were talking 1968, we ok (directed at interviewer) um--so--with the Democratic Convention coming to Chicago for, for people like, like us and I wasn't in the inner core necessarily but close enough to it, that when I wanted to get, I could--we needed to make, we needed to make a statement at the Democratic Convention that the Democrats are the only hope for some kind of stability because clearly Nixon wasn't going to do it, and we needed to, we needed to find somebody that could rally around the values that, that we were, that we all were feeling, that, we needed to address the issues internally in the country, we needed to in terms of local communities, but we also needed to get this war stopped because it was draining our treasure and blood away

DB: How did you become involved in the DNC activism?
RSD: Well I--my activism was to keep my gang kids away from the activists, where the action was, I described to you the marches in Belmont-Cragin and I wa--and as I was dealing with the leadership of some of the peopl--of the people in, that we're going to be doing the demonstrating, they said, you gotta keep your, your people away because were gonna have a hard enough time with everybody else in particularly whatever Mayor Daley has in mind for us, and you don't need groups like yours coming in to, to ah--have us have to deal with their fright and anger and--our own personal safety, cause we're gonna get, we're probably gonna get beat up anyway by Mayor Daley's people.

DB: And what did you hope to gain by participating?
RSD: Well what I hoped, what we hoped to gain was to, to get a clear message to the Democrats that they can't do business as usual, that you have to, you have to work at some how changing these structure and mainly at that time get us out of this war in Vietnam and that's why after Bobby's death, that's why ah--Eugene McCarthy seemed like the answer, but it also, it was an attempt to send a message, now remember there were also, there were also national groups coming in from the outside ah, the--the

Yippies and Yappies and all of that stuff and they had been planning to come to Chicago since the fa--since ah, summer before, so there's was a mix of these local activist on one hand, but also these national folks coming in, my, so my job was to keep my kids away, I found anyway I could to ge--Oh, lets go down and get a few Hippies, No lets, lets do this, lets go some place else, lets aaa--it wasn't, you couldn't set up a nice movie to go see, its not these kind of kids, ah, but you'd, you'd find, find other things to get them engaged in anything to keep them away from the Democratic Convention and--as it became focused around the hotel, the, ah, the Chicago Hilton. Then at night I would drive, after, after the kids ser--I gotta stop using the word kids, after, after these young people sort of sto--finally decided that it was too boring to hang out anymore, 'we're gonna go home.' I'd drive down to see what was going on, and I can remember every night driving down Michigan Ave under clegg lights, television clegg lights and seeing clouds of--tear gas, on the street from the police, and going into the, into the hotel the next day, and for two or three floors up that tear gas was all over the hotel, it was just, it just wouldn't leave, it was--it um--it was--and then, I, you know, you'd visit, you'd visit friends that were, that had gotten beat up ah, it was, it was just, it is what the so called Walker Commission later __(??) set up to look at what happened, they called it a police riot and indeed it was

DB: Um, What services did you ah, provide for the youth and the YMCA during the DNC?

RSD: Well, we would, we, we'd, we'd do sports, we'd do um--ways in which you could just sort of sit around and talk about it, ah, you know, why do you want to go down there that's ridiculous, that's, your gonna get yourself in more trouble and look the trouble your in already and ya know, you don't--would you like to spend more time dealing with all of that, paying lawyers etc... ah, we would ah--we would try, we'd try to reach to parents and get, and have them ah--try to be a little more responsible about where their kids where, ah, we would um, make sure, that ah, hm, a couple cases we made sure some cars didn't work well, ah, (laugh) anything we could think of to try and--engage in, those things that, those young people would rather like to do, set u--open up places for dances, open up places for people to just go hang out, as oppose to the street, anything to keep them off the street and away from down here.

DB: Um, Tell me more about um, the story of your experience about those three days during the DNC.

RSD: It was a time of um--It was a time--first of all it was a time of, of, of confusion of, um--not confusion about, about the message that wanted to be sent but confusion over how we could handle, how--how from my standpoint how could we ke--these students, these students away from downtown but basically it was fo--see I, I wasn't so much outside the hotel because I was trying to keep everybody away, but when I would come downtown and talk to my friends and hangout with them, it was just, it was just ah--the future--the future seemed--on one--even bleaker than it was at the beginning of the Tet

offensive because finally Humphrey won, which was not surprising, ahh, the nomination, so we figured, ya know, the war would probably continue maybe at a little lesser way than with Nixon but ah, it was, it was a time of, there's an excitement to activism at a personal level depending if, um--the adrenaline rushes that you're with friends and colleagues that share your beliefs ah, but there's, but there's also a great sense of ah, disappointment and sadness that what you'd hoped for, wasn't going to happen and you didn't know, you didn't know how it was going to end.

DB: Um and what did you hear about the Festival of Life in Lincoln Park?
RSD: Oh, for me, some of the other people that are gonna be interviewing can tell you more about that, then I can. It was a, I saw, I was at some of them, it was fun, it was like, it was like a, it was like ah--an open field--set of singing and speechifying, and a, hanging out and having an occasional beverage _(??) but basically it was, it was to--it helped relieve the tension because you knew that, that night--or that day you were gonna be god knows what, confronted with something and so it was, it was a way of sort of renewing your inner strength.

DB: Ah, how did your role change as the tensions grew?
RSD: My role change
DB: Your role change
RSD: How did my role change when?
DB: As the tensions grew, those three days
RSD: Oh, well I became, as the tensions grew I became mor--more focused on staying out where I was to keep my, to keep these students, these young people away, ah, so, ah--it was on one hand a--I was, I was fearful for them, and I--was--keeping them away meant that I could be a little less fearful about the people that were demonstrating that were my friends, ah, but it was ah, mine, mine was a role that never gets written much about, talked so much about, because it was, I wasn't on the front lines, but that was fine, I knew I had a job to do and I think we did it pretty well because, we hardly had any of our, of our young people go down here, oh those, those damn hippies, ya know, just let-em, let-em hurt themselves, that was the kind of attitude, whatever worked, huh.

DB: And then describe the winding down after the event
RSD: Oh, my--the winding down was--relief it was over, sadness that so many people got hurt, ahh, an--an inner aching that we still had no idea that there, was gonna be much major change, that things were gonna continue, given, given, nationally and certainly locally Mayor Daley certainly did not, ahh--um Mayor Daley really, really ahh, gave us no sense that anything was going to change here, given the way he unleashed the police and ahh, the fact that, we didn't think much was going to happen, that didn't mean we were going to stop, we were exhausted though, I mean physically and emotionally and

spiritually exhausted it was just, because there was the build up, there was the event and then it was, then you crashed, it was just like, oh my god, thank god thats over, umm--yeah--

DB: And then what, describe your experience of collar power
RSD: Of what
DB: Collar power
RSD: Oh, haha. Ahh, you're talking about clerical collars
DB: Yes
RSD: Ok, clerical collars. Umm--the church of the Brethren, clergy did not wear collars, necessarily, we wear a suite and a robe sometimes, I learned very quickly coming to a town that was majority Catholic that if I wanted to--have a little greater impact wearing a collar would be very helpful--so, I would, ahh, when some of my kids would be caught in jail, I'd go with them, I'd go to court with them, and I would, if it was appropriate I would, give testimony to, yes this young man did this, this is mostly young men I'm talking about umm, but there's some good things in this young man's life and at least I would get, ahh--its called testimony in mitigation, you mitigating against the issue that brought them in umm--prosecutors didn't like, collar power, ah, but that's ok, we were there and we were there to try and be helpful, when it came to these demonstrations, those of us that were in collars were able to--I think be viewed as a stabilizing force by those from the outside, oh, well, ya know, father so-and-so is there and they may be able to help correct things, not knowing that father so-and-so was also in there as an activist, protesting and carrying on, the thing that, worked for--behind that though for working with these particular sets of young people that I worked with, most of whom were catholic the, the great phrase was, you could talk to Stan because--he's our confessional if he says anything that we've told him in secret God will strike him dead, hahahaha, I still alive, ahhh, and ahh, but it was an instant way for me on the street to be recognized and be, and have a little more credibility because they weren't use to seeing a priest out in the street hanging out with them, I mean, if I had, if I had, a dollar for every hour I hung out in the street for eight years I would, I'd be able to retire even--a little more splendidly than, I'm not now. ehhh, so its ah, ah--you spend the ti-you spend the time to engage, ah, you earn, you earn the right to, to intervene in somebody's life and that takes time and you don't do that, you don't do that in an instant, umm, and so the credibility then, that myself and my staff were able to build up with these young people is what you trade in on, in a time of crisis like this, its, it's not that you just walk in and shake your hand like the parents, no, no, no, no, no you're here because you become a trusted--figure, now that can--trust can come in all sorts of levels but ah, for those of us that had been around for awhile, the, collar could let you, give you a little more credibility

DB: Describe the activism you participated in after 1968

RSD: Oh, my--well lets see after 68--we continued, continued to be active in the anti-war movement, what was and the civil rights movement here but less having to do with demonstrations and more doing with better understanding the issues and trying to deal with them politically probably. I'm not sure huh--I'm not sure ah, that worked much better either ahh--but the, the, I think we were able to, we were able to get some things done, that had not been done before, Chicago had a huge wound in it after 68, Mayor Daley's credibility was, was damaged greatly, I'm not sure he ever fully recovered from it, at a national level, locally the machine constricted and became even, even more ah, powerful than I think it was before ahh, but, in some ways it lead to, ahh after Mayor Daley's death-- and, the first Mayor Daley's death, then, then went into ahh, a man named Michael Bilandic who was kinda weak and that got, then there was a snowstorm and then Michael Bilandic didn't keep the streets open and the El's running and ahh, Jane Byrne came in the first women, first and only woman Mayor of Chicago who was treated horribly by the regular Democrats, and then lead into the first African American Mayor ahh, who ran without machine help and won. Now, I think, the activism began to pay off at that point because we got to see in Harold Washington and to a certain extent Jane Byrne that you could beat the machine, that the machine had become too oppressive and too restricted and too-- a club for political old white guys to keep their power and to keep--the money flowing in--to umm, to themselves many times, remember we have since 1970 I forget how many of our public figures have gone to jail here but, ah--anyway I think, I think the civil righ--my activism began, began to be focused on, on certainly identify--working--trying to have an agenda set, not by by me, but the people in the communities and then how can I fit in and bring the resources what--what resources I had to, to address them and thats really what I think came out of the civil rights movement in alot of ways--middle class white do gooders learning that the agenda isn't set by us, it's set by the people in the community and how can we, how can we be helped, I think the activism really, activism at its best is from the grassroots up, its, its agendas being set by, ah the people that are experiencing the, the prejudice and, and lack of economic opportunity and all the rest.

DB: Then, what direction did your career go in after 1968?
RSD: hm, hm, hm after 68 I ahh, I continued um, at, ahh, Northwest Youth Outreach building this, this program I described, I left and became, I left and became ahh, a member of the central YMCA staff coordinating programs like mine, in the suburbs because there were increasing gangs coming to the suburbs, which most people didn't want to believe and then I created a statewide task force that brought people together that said they were serving youth, but never talked to each other, so you got the YMCA, and the Boys Clubs, and the Youth Centers, and the YWCA all them together with emerging youth programs that were growing up out of the communities like the one I started, mine was unique in that I was a community based program set in one of the large social service agencies so I knew both sides and we created, we did that for awhile and then ran out of funds and then I became the director of a human relations organization called the

National Conference of Christian and Jews, which, whose purpose was to address issues of bias, prejudice, and racism, we did that through all sorts of programs, it wasn't, it wasn't religiously based although that became one, one of the major things, that ah, we discovered, humm here in Chicago umm--we learned ah, we did alot work with high school students ahh, across, across city and suburb, across races, we would address issues of prejudice and bias in incidence that came up and try to use our leverage to ahh, ahh--stand with those who had been discriminated against that try to address, address whatever that issue, particular incident was, ahh held forums and edu--for adults and then I began because I was ordained began to reach out and discover that the religious world in Chicago had changed, ahh, there are more Muslims than there are Jews, there are more Episcopalians and/or, there are more Hindus or Buddhist than there are Episcopalians, we, I mention Episcopalians because George Washington was our first Episcopalian president and George W. Bush, Bush one, was the, the last, eleven presidents were, were that, and everybody sort of, use to define America that way, but the world, the religious world had changed and each one of these religious communities were experiencing their own kind of ahh, difficulty in adapting to the, majority culture here, and so we tried to help that. Then in 2004, I quote retired ahh, and then I continue to do some part-time work for something called the Council of Religious Leaders which is co-sponsoring this, and we bring together the heads of all the religious communities in Chic--almost all the major religious communities in Chicago from Anglicans to Zoroastrians, Sikhs and Jains and Hindus and Buddhists and on an on an on and we, we bring the leadership together, ahh, they get to know each other which doesn't sound like much, but which is huge in Chicago you're not gonna have one religious community standing outside the headquarters of another yelling and screaming at their problems, they pick up the phone and talk to each other, then we address the issues that we can agree on, so were dealing right now with issues of gun control, (bang of desk) of immigration, of economic development, and ah, we are on various public agencies, task forces, and advisory committees, and then on the inside we talk about the issues that we--don't agree on, but we keep that inside.

DB: Um, during the events of 1968 was it hard to stay rooted in your faith?
RSD: I'm sorry, say that again
DB: During the events of 1968
RSD: Yeah
DB: Was it hard to stay rooted in your faith?
RSD: No, no my faith really, really propelled me to do it, I think for an activist--activists in general have some value system off of which they operate, for those of us that were Chr--that are Christian, the activism is rooted in--the person of, of Jesus who is, the model that most of us work on for equality and fairness and also for the need for spiritual sustenance ahh, its very hard to do all this stuff if you just do it on your own, you need to get in-touch with that, the spiritual side of yourself to keep you fuelled if you will, for the battles that, that come and--so my Christian faith was, was and is a source of great

strength to me, ahh, because, ahh, I stand on the shoulders of two centuries of people who provide all sorts of models for what I hope to do.

DB: What were your thoughts on how Daley handled the DNC, the police and the commun--the activist community?
RSD: Oh, terrible. Dale--Daley did not like people criticizing Chicago umm, when Chicago burned--he went out into the communities and it was a personal affront to him, now he had kept these folks economically deprived and, and all the other things, but when he would go out and, you burned my city--and that, he,he gave a--that was in 67 I think, he gave the shoot to kill order, which we still hear about, if your, even younger people have heard about it, he said to his police, if you see somebody looting a store, shoot-em and kill-em, nobody had ever issued a thing like that, and many policemen just couldn't do it, but Daley, and that lead up to these conf--these terrible confrontations, he lost, he lost so much credibility for unleashing the police and the way he did, and just being arrogant, I mean he, if you see any of the tapes of the 68 convention I mean, that jaw, he stick out there, and Abraham Ribicoff from Connecticut, senator Ribicoff, ahh, chastising him publicly for his Gestapo tactics outside, and Daley was just, I mean, he was just furious, Daley, Daley ahh, I'm not, Daley never fully recovered from 68 and its interesting it wasn't til 1994--that his son invited the DNC back--and if you drive, by that time the United Center was built, the new United Center had replaced something called the, the Stadium which was across the street--Richard the second wanted to so show, that Chicago had changed, if drive out Madison Street you'll see planters going down the center of the street from the loop all the way out to Western Ave, and that was, that was one way he was going to sh-- graphically show that--Chicago had changed, look at these beau-- look at these beautiful streets because these are the streets people would have to go to, to get to the DNC at the United Center and quite frankly that's where it stopped and it's been that since 1994.

DB: How did the events of 1968 change you?
RSD: It showed me that--a band of people--of all different persuasions and all different agendas can work together and try and affect um--affect change--and in some cases succeed and in many cases not, but at least you're building a base and a model for how you continue to do this, and maybe learn that there maybe another way here or another way there to achieve the same end, at those ends being better equality, better opportunity, better even- distribution of income, all those things that sound so good and seem to be even in this day so hard to achieve

DB: What was the most regret-regrettable consequence of the 1968 DNC?
RSD: Hmm--ahh, regrettable conse--I would say, well first of all the people that were hurt, ahh, you're going to be interviewing some people who, one Lutheran pastor who set

up a, ah, whose church was just about a little less than a mile from here and they became one of the major medical facilities for people that were hurt so there were people hurt, and there were policemen hurt, this isn't to just demonize the police even though they had been unleashed in this way, I think that, so on one hand the people that were hurt, on the other hand, I think, I think--did, you said regrettably, right? Umm, regrettably that I, I think, that the country was left--even more confused over where we were headed because both, both political parties left ahh, a pretty sad legacy from Humphrey on one hand and Nixon on the other ahh, and I, and I think it, I think, locally it increased the despair of people who were living in these horrible conditions ahh, people of color ahh, people who had been ahh, couldn't break out and, and, thes--I think that sense of, oh my gosh, after all this protest and after all this activism there's still not good jobs, our schools are still falling apart, ahh, our housing stock is awful ah, you can't get building inspectors, pay offs are off, I mean, so people, whatever hope the activism might have, might have given these folks, that got set back.

DB: What was the most positive consequence of the 1968 DNC?
RSD: Locally it brought together--those of us that were activists I think in a, in a tighter away, in a stronger way, after we repaired ourselves abit to continue, to continue the struggle in alot of different ways, I think, we could--we could look at the fact that we had exposed--a system here that was corrupt ahh, that used its force to keep the status quo and to challenge anybody that was going to resist and at least that got shown and quite frankly ahh, Mayor Daley got shown for the person that he had become, and that is ahh, and, and he was, he was exposed not just locally, but nationally and that was ahh, that was sad at one level but it was at least people got a, got a small a window into, into how this place really ran because you don't do what he did and show the arrogance publically and unleash the police and the national guard the way he did, in a way that ah, I, I think let people see this is, this is a side of Chicago that most people don't, didn't want to recognize and now they saw it.

DB: What parallels do you see between 1968 and now?
RSD: Hm, hm, hm, parallels, parallels are, as I probably said too many times there's still far to many people that are dealing with the same issues that we dealt with 1968 ah, particularly if you are a person of color and yet on the other hand there have been gains, there have been gains but parallels, the poor are still poor, and their almost poorer because as the society has become, as our society has become more focused on skills and education, and you leave back, you, you hold, you, you prevent so many people from achieving ah, those same skills ah, you just, its, it's the same, 68 and 2015 are prett--muc--are the same for those folks, yes there is some more assistance, yes there, there's many things that have changed but underneath it, people are still hurting and dying needlessly um--I, I think well certainly changes have occurred in, I believe in the larger society in accepting, accepting difference ahh, accepting difference I think is now more ah--our

suburbs--our living communities are now more accepting of people of, of color, in fact if we have any division its class now, ahh, but ahh, so now you have people of color who have moved out of the communities that they had formerly had been in and feel more comfortable there then they, then they do back from where they came, even though some are now returning interestingly enough but, I think, I think the parallel, parallels are ah--well this isn't a parallel, that's a change. I think the political system has, has opened up as well ahh, but still I believe minority, the minority voice is harder, is, is still hard to get heard.

DB: How do think the role of religious activism has changed?
RSD: I think it has become less involved in overt demonstrations like we saw in 68 and more focused on how can we, change on one hand the hearts and minds of our congregants to be, more, to understand the issues and to help deal with those issues and on the other hand I think at leadership levels, trying to influence public policy to try and address these issues, activism has changed more in those ways I think than in the kinda overt things that we saw in 68 because um--they work, they don't work as well I think as they used too, ahh, that doesn't mean that marching isn't good for some issues but it's not the same way it was in 68, so religious activism I think is, is focused on how I translate my faith into ah, reflect--for the glory of god and my neighbors good, how can I, how can I make my neighbors good my own good.

DB: Um, what you most proud of as an activist?
RSD: Hm, I hope for the few people that--for some, for some of us that know that what we did, it was, we hope we can be a model for addres--not being afraid to address issues, it doesn't have to take the form of marching, it can take the form of speaking out of, um, dealing with legislative issues, of dealing with public policy, of cal--of bring truth to power ah, I think, I think on one hand, I think there are more of us that are willing to do that on sometimes, although I do get, I do get alittle depressed over the fact that I think some people are ah, some leadership is a little too quiet on some of these issues

DB: And how have your values changed over the years?
RSD: The val--I think value-values, my values have, have if they've changed in that, I think that the base set of values I was given, that you have to be concerned about the other, your neighbor, it's just been intensified I don't think it's changed, I think it's intensified, I feel more committed to--continuing to deal with these issues ah, then ah, I would have way back when, um, so for instance if in a, Dupage County ah, three Mosque's building permits are held up because ah, of all kinds of technical issue but underneath it all we don't want Muslims next door, ah, there are, there are numbers of us, some of whom are most surprising, that will stand with the Muslims and say 'if it happens to you it can happen to any of us,' so that, that's the kind of activism I think we're

beginning to see, at a number of levels but I also, I think the hardest thing for religious leadership to deal with how to we address violence in a useful way, and how to do we deal with economic empowerment, and cause those two just go together so clearly and it's a, I'm not--I'm not sure, I wish sometimes we would be leading more in that, in those areas.

DB: What is your ah, what advice do you have for activist today?
RSD: 'keep on, keepen on,' um--don't be afraid of it, don't be afraid of it, if you see something ah, think it through, design your strategy, and then act on it, sometimes we ah, talk about the--ahh, over analyzing issues, it's, it's time to analyze but then act, sometimes I think the resistance to act, don't be afraid to act, don't be afraid to risk having people not like you, or have close friends say to you, 'ya know you're way off base here,' if you don't believe that, stand up for what you, for what you believe, and if it means shredding friendships that's to bad because the larger goal has to be to help those that—need hopefully what the activism points to

DB: What is your best advice, best piece of advice for living?
RSD: Um--I would say looking at--whatever your faith is, examine your beliefs and ground your beliefs, into, make sure that there strong, keep, keep refreshing those beliefs spiritually, theologically, and then take what, that instructs you and do something with it, just don't sit there, um, one of my favorite people in Chicago was a dear friend father Monsignor Jack Egan, catholic activist, who would call me periodically and say 'were you at that meeting last night?' 'Yeah, I was.' How many collars were there? I said, 'I was the only one.' 'You're not even, and you're not even catholic' he said ah, 'they're all hiding behind the stained glass again.' And I, I think Jack's instruction would be to, get out from behind, understand what goes on inside the stained glass because that's what, that's the fuel your gonna need to, to--to shape your, to reshape your values, and re-energize your values, but then get out and do something with them, don’t just be proud that you have a great set of values and you never do anything about it, and that means getting engaged in things locally, things regionally, things nationally, internationally whatever that may be. ‘For the glory of god and my neighbors good.’

DB: Thank you, this concludes our interview.
RSD: Thank you, you were very good.